

Performance Management for State Leaders



STEP ONE: [Plan work. Set expectations.](#) "I expect you to complete Individual Development Plans for all your employees by the end of the year."

STEP TWO: [Observe individual performance.](#) "I see you met with all your employees personally to discuss their development. I like that. Let me know if you'd like training on how to create IDPs."

STEP THREE: [Develop the capacity to perform.](#) "Let's decide what training you need, how you'll make time for it, and what you expect to get from it."

STEP FOUR: [Evaluate performance.](#) "You completed all but one of your IDPs. What happened with the missing one? Let's talk about how to get it done."

STEP FIVE: [Recognize successful performance.](#) "Great job! We worked past the problem, you completed all the IDPs on time, plus you met all of our other performance goals. Now for next year..."

Contents

Introduction	3
Step 1: Set expectations and create an Individual Development Plan	4
How to write an Individual Development Plan	5
Writing SMART objectives.....	16
Expectations discussion: steps for the Evaluator.....	19
Expectations discussion: steps for the Leader	22
Step 2: Observe the Leader at work	24
How to give and receive feedback.....	26
Progress review discussion: steps for the Evaluator.....	32
Progress review discussion: steps for the Leader	33
Step 3: Help the Leader develop.....	34
Resources.....	34
Step 4: Evaluate the Leader	36
How to avoid common pitfalls in writing performance evaluations	37
Performance evaluation discussion: steps for the Evaluator	39
Performance evaluation discussion: steps for the Leader.....	40
Step 5: Recognize successful performance.....	41
Informal ways to recognize performance	41
Formal ways to recognize performance in State service	42
Additional Resources	43
Scorecards for assessing leaders.....	43
Leadership competency guides	44
Government codes.....	44

Introduction

What is performance management?

Helping people work together to reach shared goals effectively.

This manual is for

- Supervisors, managers, and executives
- Non-rank-and-file employees

This manual will help you

- Prevent performance problems
- Get your evaluations done
- Tie evaluations to hiring, training, and planning
- Fulfill the [mandatory 80-hours of supervisory training](#)
- Meet the goals of your agency, department, division, or program
- Improve relationships between managers and leaders

By following the advice in this manual you will see

- Fewer grievances, adverse actions, and appeals
- More evaluations completed
- Less turnover

Who is the "Evaluator" and who is the "Leader"?

Since leaders at any level can use the steps in this manual to assess those who report to them, we will call the person conducting the discussions and evaluation the "**Evaluator**" and the person being coached and evaluated the "**Leader**."

The "**Leader**" may be a supervisor, manager, executive, or other non-rank-and-file employee.

This manual is not

- A statewide standard or policy
- Meant to supersede any policies or practices currently in place at any department
- Appropriate for use with rank-and-file employees; for managing performance of rank-and-file employees, departments must adhere to the appropriate [Memoranda of Understanding](#)

Step 1: Set expectations and create an Individual Development Plan

Planning work means deciding what work will be assigned to the Leader and ensuring that all work supports the position and the organization's goals. Setting performance expectations informs the Leader what is required for successful work performance.

The purpose of the initial work planning and expectations discussion is for Evaluators and their direct report Leaders to achieve a common understanding regarding job expectations, job-related competencies, and performance. During the discussion, Evaluators learn how their Leaders view their jobs and the leadership and technical competencies as they relate to their duties and responsibilities. Once work expectations are clearly defined, the Leader and Evaluator can jointly develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Resources

- [How to write an Individual Development Plan](#)
- [Writing SMART objectives](#)
- [Performance evaluation form - PDF](#)
- [Executive Officer Performance Evaluation Guide from the Department of Consumer Affairs - PDF](#)
- [IDP/PAS \(STD 637\) – PDF](#)
- [CalSTRS Executive Review form - PDF](#)
- [Caltrans Supervisory Annual/Supervisory & Managerial Probationary Report \(PM-0944\) form – PDF](#)
- [Caltrans CEA & Managerial Annual Performance Plan, Contract and Review \(PM-0945\) form - PDF](#)

Expectations discussion

- [Expectations discussion: steps for the Evaluator](#)
- [Expectations discussion: steps for the Leader](#)

How to write an Individual Development Plan

Introduction

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is

- A clear statement of a Leader's career goals and objectives for achieving those goals
- A map for attaining goals that specifies immediate and long-range training/developmental needs
- An individually-tailored action plan to develop specific competencies (knowledge and skills) needed to improve performance in present position or to prepare for new responsibilities
- A written plan for scheduling and managing a Leader's development
- A tool for an Evaluator to estimate resources needed for Leader development training
- An agreement between the Leader and Evaluator based on funds available to meet the Leader's and the organization's goals
- A tool for an organization to develop its workforce to meet future workforce planning needs

What is the purpose of the IDP?

We encourage all Leaders to grow in their present positions or progress to new ones. To do this effectively, a realistic action plan is needed. An IDP can be a useful tool to help plan a career, guide development and assess progress toward career goals and objectives.

What are the benefits to Leaders and Evaluators?

IDPs shall provide meaningful training plans that will help the Leader and the Evaluator:

- Perform duties according to established job expectations
- Improve job-performance
- Set reasonable goals
- Assess job-related strengths and weaknesses
- Schedule, plan, and implement individual development annually
- Aid in the development of Leaders to achieve the knowledge, skills and competencies according to their performance expectations
- Accurately document the current developmental needs of Leaders
- Consider the unit's and/or agency's organizational needs, mission changes, changes in technology, expected turnover, staffing needs, program plans and future needs for particular skills

To benefit from an IDP, the Leader must be involved and make a serious commitment to the future of his/her career. It may take several hours of his/her time, but it is an effort that should later prove to be well worth the investment.

Who is required to have an IDP?

Gov. Code §19992.10 states, "Appointing powers shall prepare performance appraisal reports and keep them on file as prescribed by department rule." "Department" means the Department of Personnel Administration.

- **Note:** For new permanent, full-time Leaders, the first IDP is recommended to be done 90 days from when the Leader reports for duty, unless department policy requires otherwise.

When should an IDP be prepared?

It is suggested that IDP's be prepared annually at performance evaluation time, unless your department policy requires otherwise.

What is the difference between the IDP and performance evaluations?

An IDP and a performance evaluation have the same focus; fostering individual and organizational improvement. However, a performance evaluation is more like an end-of-year profit and loss statement while an IDP is an investment plan. They should work together, but they have different intents. As part of the annual Leader performance evaluation process, the Evaluator analyzes the Leader's job and its requirements and communicates expectations and performance expectations to the Leader. Then, throughout the year, the Evaluator assesses the Leader's performance and gives feedback on a regular basis. At performance evaluation time, the Evaluator compares the Leader's performance to the previously-established expectations, makes a determination based on observations about performance levels, discusses the determination with the Leader, and together the Evaluator and Leader set expectations and objectives for the upcoming performance evaluation period.

Overview of the IDP process

Process

The IDP process is a continuing cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation between a Leader and Evaluator, for the mutual benefit of both the Leader and the organization. The IDP process requires time for both the Evaluator and Leader to:

- Analyze job requirements
- Assess current competencies
- Make informed decisions about training/developmental needs

The critical factors throughout all phases of the IDP process are interactive and effective communication between the Leader and Evaluator. For the IDP process to be effective and meaningful, each phase should be approached as a joint endeavor.

Tools

There are tools available determining job requirements. One tool that is readily accessible is the job description. [Classification specifications](#), [the Leadership Competency Model](#), [occupational analysis \(O*Net\)](#), strategic plans, and performance expectations, can also contribute to defining job requirements.

Phases

The IDP process may consist of five phases. The following information gives an overview of the process and directs Evaluators and Leaders sections in this Guide to look for information suggesting how to complete each phase.

1. Pre-discussion Planning
2. Evaluator/Leader Discussion
3. Selecting Optimum Training/Developmental Activities
4. Preparing the IDP
5. Implementing the IDP

Pre-discussion planning

The purpose of the pre-discussion planning phase is to prepare the Evaluator and Leader for their joint meeting. Both the Leader and the Evaluator have specific preliminary data-gathering responsibilities. This planning will not only provide time for discussion during the meeting, but should also ease tensions and provide direction to the discussions by having this information readily available.

Overview

This section describes specific roles and responsibilities related to pre-discussion planning. As you will see, both Evaluator and the Leader have many questions to answer and things to consider in preparation for the Evaluator/Leader discussion. The following information provides an overview of the pre-discussion planning process:

Both the Leader's and the Evaluator's roles

- Ask: Where Have I Been?; Where Am I Now?; Where Can I Go?
- Review performance evaluation forms and performance expectations.
- Consider future possibilities for the Leader.

The remainder of this section is divided into three major parts:

- Who is responsible for developing an IDP?
- Leader's responsibilities
- Evaluator's responsibilities

Who is responsible for developing an IDP?

Both the Evaluator and the Leader are responsible for developing an IDP. While the Leader completes the IDP, with the cooperation and assistance of the Evaluator, it is the Evaluator, and possibly other departmental sections who normally have to approve individual training/development plans (especially if state time or expenditures are required) on the IDP. The Leader and Evaluator are both responsible for performance improvement, and the IDP process is an important tool to achieve that objective. Developing an IDP is a collaborative effort. If the Leader and Evaluator systematically work through the suggested steps in this Guide, the following opportunities may present themselves for both the Leader and Evaluator:

- Discuss critical job requirements and responsibilities.
- Outline the knowledge and skills needed to perform the work.
- Identify a Leader's talents and needs.
- Define individual job satisfaction.
- Improve both organizational and individual performance.

Leader's responsibilities

This planning process should enable the Leader to enter the Evaluator/Leader discussion with some confidence and a firmer perspective on the Leader's professional direction for the next 1-2 years. It is helpful to remember that, as a Leader, you have a two-fold role in developing your IDP.

- **Initiator:** Assesses current skills and competencies, explores developing options, looks at the needs of the organization and sees realistic, constant improvement as a responsibility to oneself and the agency.
- **Owner:** Assembles information, weighs alternatives, makes trade-offs, and proposes objectives and activities.

Where Have I Been? To determine what you have accomplished in your current position over the past year, consider all previous training, development, and job experiences, including:

- On-the-job training
- Formal training
- Developmental assignments
- Self-development activities

Where Am I Now? To determine your current job status, read your job description, performance evaluation, strategic plan performance metrics (if any), and past performance evaluations. Think about the work performed over the past year and develop these lists:

- I excel at these parts of my job: _____.
- In general, I excel at this kind of work: _____.
- These managerial or technical competencies are necessary to perform my current duties: _____.
- I need to develop or strengthen these competencies: _____.

- I need these kinds of assignments or training to develop or strengthen these competencies:
_____.

Where Can I Go? To determine what professional opportunities may lie ahead, focus on these major areas:

- Positions in which you are interested
- Short-range goals
- Long-range goals

Positions:

- Consider a range of options (such as, positions in your unit, other units of your department, other departments) that might interest you.
- Review the [Salary Transfer Determination Calculator Tool](#) for lateral mobility ideas.
- To find out more about other unit positions, talk to the unit's Leaders or contact the HR office.
- Based on this examination of options, decide on short-range goals (1-2 years) and long-range goals (2-5 years).

Short-Range Goals (1-2 years):

- Identify the technical or general leadership competencies needed to obtain your short-range goals.
- Ask questions such as: How strong or weak am I in these competencies?; Is it possible for me to develop these competencies?; What kind of training or developmental activities will enable me to develop these competencies?
- Review short -range goals again to ensure that they are realistic and attainable.

Long-Range Goals (2-5 years):

- Identify the technical or leadership competencies needed to obtain your long range goals.
- Ask questions such as: How strong or weak am I in these competencies?; What kind of training or experience will enable me to develop these competencies?; How much?; How long will it take?; Are resources (such as funding and training opportunities) available for me to develop these competencies?; What contribution can I make to the organization?
- Review long-range goals to ensure that they are realistic and attainable.
- Rank in priority all the technical or managerial competencies that need to be developed.

Evaluator's responsibilities

In preparing for the Evaluator/Leader discussion, the Evaluator should remember that he/she ideally serves in the following roles:

- **Consultant:** Provides insights about Leader's skills and potential and suggests ways to develop these skills and where the Leader should focus efforts.
- **Advisor:** Shares knowledge about the organization, personal career experiences, and specific position required, or recommended job related, or career related training.
- **Planner:** Gives insight into the Leader IDP and decides what is in the best interest of the work unit as a whole and the organization.
- **Evaluator:** Determines if the investment in the training and developmental activities resulted in improved Leader and work unit, program, or organizational performance.

The Evaluator may also consider:

- The Leader's current level of performance; and future possibilities for the Leader.

Action Steps for the Evaluator prior to discussion:

- Review the Leader's current performance evaluation.
- Ask questions such as: What are the Leader's strengths with regard to managerial or technical competencies?; Is the Leader lacking some technical and managerial competencies to perform well? If so, which ones?; How can the Leader attain these competencies?; Are there any other problems that may be affecting the Leader's ability to meet the performance expectations?; What program resources (if any) can be used to help the Leader improve competency levels?
- Review the current performance expectations used for the evaluation.
- Ask and evaluate these questions: Were the performance expectations too stringent in any area?; Were the performance expectations too lenient in any area?; Do the performance expectations need to be updated or revised, and if so, how?
- Consider the unit's and/or agency's organizational needs and strategic priorities over the next few years, along with the Leader's needs and goals.
- Ask and evaluate these questions: What changes in mission, technology, programs or staff are expected?; Should the Leader be developed for added responsibilities, and if so, what kind, where and how?; What kind of development will the Leader need to reach the goals?; What resources can be assigned to support this IDP?

Evaluator/Leader discussion

Purpose of Evaluator/Leader discussion

The Evaluator/Leader discussion provides the opportunity for open communication between parties about all that has been considered during the pre-discussion planning phase. The Leader and Evaluator each have specific responsibilities to ensure that the conference is effective and objectives are met so that an IDP form can be prepared.

Leader's responsibilities

The following information describes what the Leader should review and discuss with his/her Evaluator during the discussion.

- Review performance evaluation results. Ask these questions:
 - Were the performance expectations met? If not, why? If so, how?
 - What weaknesses (if any) were identified? Are technical or managerial competencies lacking? If yes, which? If not, is there any other problem affecting performance?
 - How can performance be improved?
- Review short- and long-range goals. Ask these questions:
 - Are the goals realistic?
 - Discuss the unit's and/or agency's goals, needs and priorities. To what extent do my individual goals mesh with those of the unit and/or agency?
 - Are the goals attainable?
 - What is my level of commitment toward attaining the goals.
- Review current technical and/or managerial competencies. Ask these questions:
 - What competencies do I have to meet my goals?
 - What competencies do I need to develop?
- Identify developmental needs by determining the difference between the competencies I currently have and those needed to meet my goals.
- Rank developmental needs based on the unit's and/or agency's organizational needs and priorities, as previously reviewed.
- Discuss training and developmental activities to meet my needs.
- Select developmental activities and training that will meet my needs. Consider a variety of developmental approaches and strategies, and listen to the Evaluator's ideas. (See Section D of this guide.)

Evaluator's Responsibilities

During the discussion, the Evaluator should:

- Provide feedback to the Leader on everything discussed, striving for a two-way discussion.
- Be realistic and objective about which activities will best suit the needs of the Leader, as well as the broader needs of the unit and/or organization.
- Discuss in detail the optimum developmental activities that are possible and appropriate.
- Take time to prioritize the developmental activities with the Leader.
- Identify criteria used to evaluate Leader's development.

Selecting optimum training/developmental activities

The matching of identified training/developmental needs with available learning/development activities is a major step in the IDP process. A major difficulty Evaluators and Leaders encounter in matching needs with activities is selecting the optimum developmental activities which provide the maximum learning within the boundaries of the organizations':

- Mission,
- Budget,
- Workload,
- Travel,
- Staffing,
- Time constraints, and
- Other operational needs.

To minimize these challenges, a variety of developmental approaches and strategies should be considered. Training is often thought of in terms of formal training courses. Actually there are four basic types of developmental experiences to consider in planning the IDP:

- On-the-job-training,
- Formal classroom training,
- Self-development, and
- Developmental activities.

While all four types of developmental experiences have their individual advantages and disadvantages, it is crucial to stress the importance of choosing the appropriate developmental experience that most effectively and efficiently meets the Leader's specific needs. Although it would be ideal to incorporate a combination of all four types, the resources available to the Leader/Evaluator may not make this possible. That is why an open discussion between the Leader and Evaluator concerning all options is necessary to identify what is feasible for approval.

On-the-job-training

Structured on-the-job-training is the most frequently used method of individualized learning. In this situation, the Leader is counseled and coached while actually performing official duties. It usually involves individual instruction by the Evaluator or a designated staff member because of his/her experience in the task or procedure to be learned. This approach can be used to teach Leaders new procedures, tasks and technology.

Formal classroom training

In-classroom training is probably the most common experience. This training may take place away from the work site. Depending on the objectives, specific program and instructor's approach, this experience can be very valuable. It may be the only alternative to acquire specific or specialized technical or managerial competencies. In many instances, however, formal classroom training is not the only, or the best way for a Leader to learn. Therefore, it is suggested that no matter what the Leader's needs are, consider this experience second to any training the Leader can acquire at the work site.

Self-development

When a Leader aspires to a new career and his/her developmental needs cannot be directly related to present or anticipated work assignments, or resources are not available, the Leader may undertake self-development activities such as:

- Taking evening or weekend courses at local schools,
- Watching educational or training videos,
- Using correspondence and other self-study courses,
- Reading books and other publications or journals, and
- Using PC tutorials or computer assisted training programs.

A Leader should be cognizant of the balance between what he/she wants in terms of development and what his/her supervisor/manager/executive Evaluator can authorize. Your supervisor/manager/executive Evaluator may be limited by law or department policy as to which type of developmental experiences he or she may authorize. To meet all your goals, it may be necessary for you to gain some competencies on your own time.

Developmental activities

One of the best ways to train for added responsibilities or higher job opportunities is through developmental activities. With the support and assistance of the Evaluator, the Leader's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the Leader temporarily transferred to another area to learn first-hand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job. Examples of developmental activities include the following list:

- **Shadowing:** Providing a trainee or learner with the opportunity to observe a well-qualified, journeyman level Leader perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the learner needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
- **Rotational Assignments:** Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.

- **Task Force or Special Project Assignments:** This is particularly effective if the learner has an opportunity to work with well-qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.
- **Development of Job Aids:** This requires that the learner develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information.
 - Cross-Program Assignments
 - Special Work Projects
 - Coaching Lower Level Leaders

Preparing the IDP

The IDP form is simply a means of formally documenting a Leader's plan. Once the Evaluator/Leader discussion has been held, the Individual Development Plan form may be completed.

The following information describes the process of completing the IDP form.

1. Leader completes the form.
2. Leader and Evaluator discuss and agree on contents of the form.
3. Evaluator ensures that the form is properly completed.
4. Leader and Evaluator sign the form.
5. Leader and Evaluator keep a copy of the form.
6. Evaluator forwards a copy of the form to the Training Office.
 - **Note:** Do not send the Performance Appraisal Summary to the Training Office. The PAS or formal Performance Evaluation is confidential and is sent confidentially to HR and filed in the Leader's Official Personnel File
7. Leader implements the IDP.

Implementing the IDP

Leader's responsibilities

Completion of the IDP form acknowledges the Leader's commitment to accomplish the planned training and development. To implement the plan effectively, three actions are required on the Leader's part:

- **Documentation:** Formal training and developmental activities that involve exchange of funds, official time or both must be documented and *approved in advance*.
- **Participation:** Once the request for training is approved, it is up to the Leader to carry through with the experience. The Evaluator will support and guide the Leader, but the primary responsibility for successfully reaching the goals rests with the Leader. It will take time to reach your goals, but the long-term investment will be worth it.
- **Evaluation:** Just taking a course or being involved in a developmental assignment does not necessarily mean the Leader has fully met his/her commitment. Training and development

needs are identified primarily to enable one to perform with greater ease and efficiency on the job, thus helping the agency accomplish its mission. The crucial step is applying what is learned to the job and practicing it. After each developmental activity, the Leader should consider:

- Completing the Evaluation Data.
- Meeting and discussing with the Evaluator the developmental experience.
- Returning the Evaluation of the training to the Training Office.

Evaluator's responsibilities

Evaluator should consider:

- Periodically reassessing the Leader's individual development plan
- Meeting with the Leader after each training and developmental activity
- Making periodic written evaluations of how the training and development activities have affected the Leader's performance

After the IDP is completed

What will happen to the IDP?

The total sum of all the organization's training requests will usually be combined into one database and used to identify the entire agency's training needs. The information can help develop a training budget, find areas of cost savings, and help set priorities. This process provides the Training Office with a tool to schedule work to accommodate training needs. The IDP may also provide the Training Office with some measure of the organization's interest in Leader development.

- **Note:** Departments may already have a process in place for maintaining and implementing IDP's. This Guide does not intend to supersede the established practices and policies of such departments.

Reviewing or revising an IDP

An IDP is a plan for development, not a contract in stone. IDP's should be reviewed, revised or both as follows:

- at progress reviews of the performance plans,
- upon completion of training, and
- altered as performance plans and/or job assignments change.

Writing SMART objectives

Introduction

Evaluators and Leaders should utilize the SMART technique to create achievable objectives when writing Individual Development Plans.

Simply put, SMART stands for objectives that are:

- S – Specific
- M – Measurable
- A – Achievable and aligned
- R – Realistic
- T – Timely

Specific

Specific means that the objective is concrete, detailed, focused, and well defined. Specific also means that the objective is results and action-oriented. Objectives need to be straightforward and communicate what the Evaluator expects to see happen. To help set specific objectives, ask the following questions.

WHAT is the Leader going to do? These are best written using strong, action verbs such as conduct, develop, build, plan, execute, etc. This helps the objective to be results-oriented and action-oriented.

WHY is this important for the Leader to do? What are the benefits of accomplishing the objective?

WHO is going to do what? Who else needs to be involved?

WHEN should the objective to be completed?

Measurable

What gets measured gets done.

For an objective to be measurable, the measurement source should be identifiable and able to track actions as progress is made towards the objective. Measurement is the standard used for comparison.

Being a high-performing organization means that what is measured is done. The process of establishing and measuring progress against measurable objectives enables everyone to understand where they stand relative to what is expected.

It is important to have measurable objectives that will encourage and motivate the Leader as progress is being made toward the performance objectives. Measurements help individuals recognize when they achieve a specific objective.

To determine if your objective is measurable, ask questions such as.....How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

Achievable and aligned

Objectives need to be achievable. If the objective is too far in the future, the Leader may find it difficult to keep motivated and to strive to attain it. In addition, objectives need to stretch the person, but not so far that he/she becomes frustrated and/or loses motivation.

Align objectives with the mission and goals of the organization.

Realistic

Even if an objective is achievable, it may not be realistic. However, realistic does not mean easy. Realistic means that you have the resources to get it done. The achievement of an objective requires resources such as skills, money, training, equipment, people, etc. to do the task required to achieve the objective. Keep objectives realistic to ensure they will stretch the person. Keep in mind objectives that are achievable and realistic may require a change in priorities for them to happen. Be aware of dependencies.

Timely

Timely means setting deadlines for the achievement of the objective. Deadlines need to be both achievable and realistic. With no time frame, there is no sense of urgency which decreases motivation. Time frames create necessary urgency and prompt action.

Diagnostic questions

To ensure that SMART objectives are well thought-out and well-written, below are some questions to consider to help both the Evaluator and Leader write effective, meaningful objectives:

Specific

- What exactly is the Leader going to do (with or for whom)?
- What strategies will be used?
- Is the objective well understood?
- Is the objective described with action verbs?
- Is it clear who is involved?
- Is it clear what needs to happen?
- Will this objective lead to the desired results?
- Is the outcome clear?

Measurable

- How will I know that the objective has been met?
- Can these measurements be obtained?

Achievable and aligned

- Can the Leader get it done in the proposed time frame?
- Does he/she understand the limitations and constraints?
- Has anyone else done this successfully?
- Is the objective aligned with the organization's mission and goals?

Realistic

- Do we have the resources available to achieve this objective?
- Do we need to revisit priorities to make this happen?
- Is it possible to achieve this objective?

Timely

- When will this objective be accomplished?
- Is there a stated deadline?
- Is the deadline realistic?

When writing an IDP, write SMART objectives and a specific plan for achieving them.

SAMPLE Performance Objectives

-Goals for further improvement in job performance during the next year to meet or exceed expectations for the present position or to develop new skills.

- I will complete the performance management cycle for every team member annually.

SAMPLE Plans for Achieving Objectives

-Specific methods by which the Leader can work toward accomplishing his or her performance objectives.

- Plan work and set expectations for all staff by 1/15.
- Observe and give ongoing and quarterly feedback to each team member.
- Ensure development activities are ongoing and that staff follow their action plans. Check in regularly.
- Meet with HR Office by January 15 for guidance on conducting effective performance evaluations and learn any legal requirements.
- Formally evaluate all team members by 12/31.
- Recognize high performers no later than two weeks after the final evaluation.

Expectations discussion: steps for the Evaluator

Prepare for the expectations discussion

Review the Leader's job description and classification specification. Is it accurate?

- If the job description does not already include leadership competencies, talk to your HR professional about the possibility of adding them if consistent with classification specifications. You can see a [sample Staff Services Manager I job description written using competencies](#).
- Also review the classification specification for technical competencies.

Review the department's strategic plan and any prior performance evaluations.

- Clarify your performance expectations for the Leader and the position and communicate what support you will provide.
- Consider assignments or projects for the Leader for the upcoming year. Ensure they are aligned with the Leader's job description, classification specifications, program goals, and the mission and goals of the department.

Review the Leadership Competency Model.

- Determine the Leader's responsibility level. (Link or Bookmark?)
- Review the associated successful "performance" behavioral indicators and select those that are required for the position. Determine the Leader's developmental needs in each of these areas. (For help in determining developmental needs, you may find the [scorecards for assessing leaders](#) useful.)
- **Note:** On occasion it is useful to have a Leader complete his or her own self-assessment which you can compare to your own views of how that person is performing in each competency. The differences can be useful in identifying communication and training gaps.

Consider the Individual Development Plan.

- Consider how job requirements and performance expectations relate to the elements in the [IDP/PAS \(STD 637\) - PDF](#). (If your department uses different evaluation forms, substitute them for the STD 637.)
 - [Performance evaluation form - PDF](#)
 - [Executive Officer Performance Evaluation Guide from the Department of Consumer Affairs - PDF](#)
 - [IDP/PAS \(STD 637\) – PDF](#)
 - [CalSTRS Executive Review form - PDF](#)
 - [Caltrans Supervisory Annual/Supervisory & Managerial Probationary Report \(PM-0944\) form – PDF](#)
 - [Caltrans CEA & Managerial Annual Performance Plan, Contract and Review \(PM-0945\) form - PDF](#)

Determine the beginning and ending dates of the evaluation period.

- **Note:** Evaluation periods should be no more than 12 months from the date of the last evaluation period (Gov. Code § 19992.8)

Schedule the discussion.

Set up a date, time, and location for the initial performance discussion. Provide the Leader a copy of the department's strategic plan, his/her job description, classification specification, a blank copy of the STD 637 (or department form) , and the Leadership Assessment Tool related to his/her Leadership responsibility level. It is important for the Leader to know the elements upon which he/she will be evaluated at the beginning of the evaluation period.

Ask the Leader to review these documents and (if appropriate) to complete the Leadership Assessment Tool associated with his/her responsibility level. Also ask the Leader to come to the meeting prepared to discuss any of the following questions you consider relevant:

- What do you see as the key elements of your job?
- How do the key elements align with the mission and goals of the organization?
- What is the relevance of the leadership competencies to your job?
- What leadership competencies do you think are your strengths? What competencies do you need to develop?
- What are your job and career goals over the next 1-2 years?
- What competencies will help you achieve your work and career goals in the next 1- 2 years?
- What developmental activities would support meeting job expectations and competency development?
- What can I do as your Evaluator to support your success and development?

During the expectations discussion

Set a positive tone.

Minimize distractions:

- Conduct the meeting in a private setting.
- Turn off or silence all mobile devices.
- Do not respond to emails, telephone calls, or other distractions during the discussion.
- Start the meeting on time.
- Be prepared and have an agenda.

Open the discussion.

Greet the Leader and review the purpose of the meeting. Let the Leader know that you will be having a conversation about some or all of the following topics:

- Performance expectations and work assignments for the upcoming year.
- General leadership competencies related to his/her position.
- Any technical competencies related to his/her position.

- Evaluation criteria to be used over the next year.
- Agreement on developmental activities and what actions both parties will take to ensure that the developmental activities are completed.
- Dates of the formal evaluation period in which observations will be made.
- Dates of regularly scheduled interim discussions about progress on assignments and development activities.

Review planned work and expectations for the upcoming year.

While much of the Leader's work (supervisory and managerial work) is ongoing, where appropriate, clearly outline work assignments and the criteria for the assignments.

Involve the Leader in the conversation. Are the assignments, performance expectations, and deadlines clear? Do they seem reasonable?

Identify which competencies will be practiced in each assignment. Communicate how expectations for the assignment are tied to expectations for job-related competencies and to the evaluation form.

Review the Leadership Competency Model.

- Discuss the responsibility level, behavioral indicators, and indicators of successful performance for the Leader's responsibility level.
- Review the general leadership competencies and any technical competencies that relate to the position and what performance might look like to meet, exceed expected standards, or be unacceptable.
- If appropriate, discuss how each of you completed the Leadership Assessment Tool and then jointly identify developmental needs.

Review the performance elements in the STD 637 that will be used for the final performance evaluation.

Substitute department-specific forms and rating criteria if appropriate.

- Ensure you are both on the same page about what is expected and what assignments are planned. Discuss what each rating level might look like.
- The more clearly assignments and expectations are defined at the beginning of an evaluation period, the greater the chance the employee will achieve successful performance.

Jointly draft an Individual Development Plan for the upcoming year.

- See [How to write an Individual Development Plan](#).

Closing the expectations discussion

Convey that this is just one of many on-going discussions.

You will have more discussions with the Leader over the next year. Emphasize the importance of having on-going dialogue and that feedback and sharing of ideas and concerns is a two-way process.

Schedule interim performance discussions.

Schedule discussions for the upcoming year to discuss progress on work assignments and developmental activities. This will show your continued commitment to the Leader's success and development.

Thank the Leader.

Thank the Leader for his/her time, ideas, and participation. Ask Leader for his/her feedback.

Document all decisions in writing.

- **Note:** Send a copy of all documents to the Leader. If there is an IDP and training plan, send just the training plan to the Training Office to include in the organization-wide Annual Training Plan.

Expectations discussion: steps for the Leader

Prepare for the expectations discussion

Review.

Review your job description, classification specification, the department's strategic plan, the Leadership Competency Model, and the STD 637. If asked to do so, complete the [assessment scorecard](#) related to your responsibility level.

Consider your response any of the following questions that your Evaluator has sent in advance:

- What do you see as the key elements of your job?
- Which assignments are you working on now and which assignments in the past demonstrated your job performance?
- What assignments in the future would demonstrate your contribution to the organizational mission and goals?
- What is the relevance of the leadership competencies to your job?
- What leadership competencies do you think you need to develop further?
- What are your goals for the next 1-2 years (job and career)?
- What competencies will help you achieve your goals in the next 1- 2 years?
- What developmental activities would support your competency development?
- What feedback would you give your Evaluator that you believe would have a direct impact on your success?

During the expectations discussion

Make sure you fully understand your Evaluator's performance expectations.

Ask questions. What are your projects and on-going work for the next year? What are deadlines and criteria for successful completion? How do these relate to the elements in the STD 637?

Share.

Share your ideas, goals, what general leadership competencies you see as most relevant to your job, what technical competencies you recommend adding (if any), and what gaps exist (if any) in your knowledge/skill level.

Be sure you are clear on performance expectations for each of the general Leadership competencies and technical competencies.

Share your thoughts and ideas on developmental activities.

Provide feedback.

If asked, provide constructive feedback to your Evaluator on the process.

Closing the expectations discussion

Review.

Review your understanding of performance expectations, how you will be evaluated, and the developmental activities you will undertake.

Ask for a schedule.

Although ongoing feedback about performance is critical, inquire about dates for regularly-scheduled interim progress discussions.

Thank the Evaluator.

Thank your Evaluator for his/her support and guidance.

Step 2: Observe the Leader at work

High performing organizations make sure that all Leaders are aware of the direction the organization is taking and are working together to achieve those goals. Being a high performing organization is not a one-time effort; it is a culture, a way of doing business. Therefore, Evaluators need to have on-going discussions about performance with Leaders including how the Leader's work and performance aligns with organizational performance and how the Leader is progressing. Two ways to do this are to:

- Provide on-going feedback
- Have regularly-scheduled progress review discussions

Provide on-going feedback

Provide on-going, informal feedback and keep notes on observed performance throughout the year.

Provide feedback to:

- Inform Leaders how they are performing
- Help Leaders understand how their work supports the organization
- Acknowledge Leaders for successes and strengths
- Help Leaders develop new skills and abilities
- Provide an opportunity for early "course corrections"
- Reinforce positive performance

See the section on [how to give and receive feedback](#) for more guidance.

You can also find some great examples of how to phrase feedback in the [Virtual Help Desk for Supervisors and Managers in the Supervisor's Responsibilities during the Probation Period](#).

Keep notes on your observations throughout the entire performance evaluation period. Also get feedback (preferably written) from others for whom the Leader has done work. Be sure to check with your Human Resources Office for guidance on keeping personnel-related files.

Have regularly-scheduled progress review discussions

Regularly-scheduled progress review discussions are critical to successful performance management. Actually, many consider them the heart of the performance management cycle. These discussions are instrumental in heading off problem performance before it escalates and provide opportunities throughout the year to recognize and motivate those performing well.

Benefits of progress review discussions to Evaluators

Evaluators will have an opportunity to provide information directly to their Leaders on contributions he/she is making to the organization, on progress to date, any new assignments that have come up, or any areas that need to be improved.

Evaluators will have an opportunity to prevent surprises at the final performance evaluation discussion.

Evaluators will have an opportunity to find out how the Leader feels about his/her job—whether he/she enjoys the work, if he/she is ready for greater responsibilities, if he/she is feeling overwhelmed by workload, if he/she is having any problems with staff, and whether he/she needs any assistance from you.

Evaluators and Leaders will have an opportunity to get to know each other better. The more Evaluators and Leaders know one another, the greater the chance that Evaluators and Leaders be able to communicate effectively on an ongoing basis, especially if a problem arises.

Benefits of progress review discussions to Leaders

Leaders will have an opportunity to get more structured feedback on how you are doing. It is great to hear about the good work you are doing. It is also helpful to find out if you have not been meeting expectations early on so you can improve..

Leaders will have an opportunity to talk to your evaluator about new ideas, barriers you face, progress on your developmental activities, how you feel about your job. This is your chance to have an open discussion with your evaluator's undivided attention about how your job is going.

Resources

- [How to give and receive feedback](#)

Progress review discussion

- [Progress review discussion: steps for the Evaluator](#)
- [Progress review discussion: steps for the Leader](#)

How to give and receive feedback

Giving and receiving feedback is a way of doing business; it should be woven into the fabric of the organization on a daily basis. It contributes to building a high performance culture. All Leaders generally want and need ongoing feedback on their performance. Leaders are interested in knowing how well they are doing in relation to what is expected of them by their Evaluators. Leaders also want the opportunity to give feedback, ideas and suggestions of their own.

Designing effective feedback into a performance management program improves individual and team performance and makes your organization more effective. With an effective feedback process, Leaders who see their progress are motivated to reach their performance goals.

Why give feedback?

Effective and timely feedback during the performance evaluation period is an essential component of a successful performance management program. If Leaders need to improve their performance, the sooner they find out about it, the sooner they can correct the problem. If they have reached or exceeded a goal, the sooner they receive positive feedback, the more rewarding and reinforcing it is to them.

Leaders should be comfortable asking their Evaluators for feedback as they try new things and accomplish their developmental activities and performance objectives.

However, all too often we forget to give feedback as we "assume" others know what we are thinking.

Evaluators are encouraged to provide ongoing, objective feedback as a way to:

- Show appreciation
- Acknowledge and reinforce good performance
- Provide "course corrections"
- Keep Leaders satisfied with their job which increases retention
- Increase Leaders' confidence in what they are doing

A primary motivator for many Leaders is realizing that they can make a difference in the work they are doing for the organization and the public. Giving Leaders feedback provides an opportunity for them to understand how to make that difference for the organization and the people they serve. It also serves as a model on how they should interact with their own staff.

What are sources of feedback?

Feedback can come from many different sources:

- Observations by other managers and evaluators
- Data
- Feedback from peers
- Input from customers

It is up to the Evaluator to determine how best to gather the information, and from which sources, to ensure timely and relevant feedback and a fair final rating of the Leader.

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions!" –Ken Blanchard

How do I give effective feedback?

Deliver feedback in a way the Leader can understand. Here are some suggested guidelines for giving effective feedback, regardless of whether it is positive or negative.

Be timely and specific.

Provide feedback when it happens and focus on specific factual data.

- Less effective: The project management report you submitted four months ago was poorly written.
- More Effective: The project management report you submitted yesterday needs a table of contents and additional data to support your recommendations.
- Less effective: Great job on that presentation!
- More effective: Great job on the presentation you gave this morning. You were enthusiastic and had excellent examples that clarified your key points. Staff will have an easier time implementing the process because of your work.

Be straightforward and avoid words like "always" or "never."

- Less effective: "You never meet deadlines."
- More effective: "I did not receive the Franklin Report on Friday when it was due."
- Reference the impact of the behavior on you, the team, the job, and/or organization.
- Less effective: "You really let us down."
- More effective: "Because you missed the grant proposal deadline, our department cannot compete for the \$100,000 grant."

Focus on behavior; not on personality, motivation, or attitudes.

- Less effective: "You have a bad attitude."
- More effective: "You missed three staff meetings this week."

Give at the appropriate time and in the appropriate setting.

- Feedback is most useful if given at the earliest opportunity after the behavior occurred. If corrective, be sure to give in private. Excellent feedback given at the wrong time may do more harm than good. Consider the person's style. Not everyone likes public praise.

Avoid "dumping."

- Avoid saving up all your feedback and giving it all at once. Consider the needs of the other person.

Ensure understanding.

- If appropriate, you might ask the recipient to paraphrase what you said. If you give sensitive information, it may be distorted.

Listen to the other person's side.

Stay positive.

- Provide feedback in a calm, positive manner as people respond better to information presented in a positive way. This is not to say that information should be sugar-coated, but present accurate, factual, and complete feedback. Reinforce what the Leader did well and then identify what the Leader needs to do in the future to improve his/her performance.

Be part of the solution.

How do I give positive feedback?

Giving feedback includes acknowledging Leaders when they have performed well. The most reliable form of positive feedback is praise and recognition from the Evaluator. Positive feedback should include things the Leader is doing well and the positive effect on the organization.

Evaluators should look for chances to praise good performance, or in the word of Ken Blanchard, "Catch people doing something right."

How do I make corrective feedback a learning experience?

Providing corrective feedback is one way an Evaluator can help Leaders correct their deficiencies, learn, clarify expectations, and provide resources to improve performance. While Evaluators should keep the guidelines for providing feedback in mind, below are some specific recommendations to deliver corrective feedback:

Address the Leader's actions or behaviors as soon as possible

- The experience that brought about the need for corrective feedback should be fresh in the mind of the Leader. If the Leader knows that something was performed incorrectly, then he/she worries about what will happen consequently, thus possibly impacting morale and productivity. Relieve the tension as quickly as possible by recognizing the mistake, and give feedback as an act of kindness will help everyone move in a positive direction. This prevents surprises at the end of the evaluation period.

Address specific behavior

- Be as specific as possible about the behavior that you want changed. Avoid discussions about Leader's attitudes or perceptions of intent. If a Leader appears to be mad or solemn during staff meetings, do not tell the Leader to improve his/her attitude. Rather, inform the Leader of the behavior that was observed, and advise the Leader that he/she is expected to voice his/her concerns and ideas during meetings. Keep the feedback business oriented and professional. Keep emotions out of the discussion.

Get the Leader's side of the story

- Find ways to encourage the Leader to share his/her side of the situation. Ask how to avoid it next time. You may find that your analysis of the situation is different from the Leader's perspective so it is important to hear it. If the Leader does not accept your view, the Leader may not accept your feedback either. Gathering information from the Leader may decrease their resistance to accept your feedback.

Ask for a plan to change

- Explore alternative ways for the Leader to handle the situation or job task and correct the problem. To accomplish this, ask the Leader if the approach selected is achieving the intended results. If not, together search out alternative behavior that offers an increased probability of success for the future. Ask how you can help.

Concentrate on the lesson to be learned

- For many people, mistakes are often made once and are never made again. The important thing to concentrate on is what did the person learn from the performance issue and how it will be prevented from happening again.

And what about receiving feedback?

Equally as important as giving feedback is the ability to receive feedback on job performance. This holds true whether you are the Evaluator or the Leader. It is critical to model the behaviors you want from them. However, receiving feedback (at least on areas to improve) can be difficult. Here are some suggested tips:

Welcome constructive feedback.

Let others know that you want feedback. You cannot improve as an Evaluator unless you are aware how your own behaviors might be helping or hindering effective performance discussions. During your initial performance discussion, you may want to review the basic principles of giving and receiving effective feedback and tell you Leader that you want to know at least two ways you can improve as an Evaluator at each progress review meeting.

Listen carefully.

- Listen to what the person giving feedback has to say – don't interrupt.
- Take it professionally, not personally. Avoid being defensive or trying to justify your position.
- It is appropriate to share your feelings about the feedback, but be sure not to become defensive and start telling the Leader why his/her feedback is wrong. Arguing, justifying your position, or denial are all negative emotions, making the conversation more of a challenge. Your goal is to better understand the issue or behavior at hand that was perceived as "needing to change."

Look for examples.

- Seek examples of the behavior at issue to help you understand the other person's perspective. Ask questions such as "Can you tell me more?" "Can you share an example of when this occurred?" Draw the person out.

Summarize.

Summarize in your own words what the giver of the feedback is saying. This helps check for misunderstandings.

Evaluate feedback before responding.

It can be difficult to receive feedback on your own performance. But is the person sharing something you would benefit from knowing? Do they have a point?

Make your own choice on how to use the feedback.

Feedback can be a gift allowing you to grow and develop in your job. Some feedback can be useless.

Thank the person.

Remember, this person cared enough to share feedback with you.

"Successful people learn to develop an attitude of looking for a gem of good advice even when it is buried under a lot of worthless noise." -Paul Timm

What resources are available to help me give useful performance feedback?

[The Truth About Creating Effective Feedback Loops with Your Employees](#) By William S. Kane. FT Press, 2010

[Performance Appraisals and Phrases for Dummies](#)[®] By Ken Lloyd. For Dummies, 2009

[Managing People](#) By Johanna Hunsaker. Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2009

[Becoming an Exceptional Executive Coach](#) By Michael Frisch; Robert Lee; Karen L Metzger; Jeremy Robinson. AMACOM, 2011

[The Executive and the Elephant: A Leader's Guide for Building Inner Excellence](#) By Richard L. Daft. Jossey-Bass, 2010

[Managing for Performance: Delivering Results Through Others](#) By Pam Jones. FT Press Pub, 2009

[Results Management: Effective People Management to Achieve Excellent Results](#) By Ong Teong Wan. Wiley Pub, 2010

[Resolving Conflicts at Work: Ten Strategies for Everyone on the Job](#) By Kenneth Cloke; Joan Goldsmith. Jossey-Bass, 2011

[Mentoring Millennials](#). By Jeanne Meister and Karie Willyerd. Harvard Business Review 88, no. 5 (May 2010): 68-72

Progress review discussion: steps for the Evaluator

Before the progress review discussion

Review.

Review any work products and progress to date. Review notes on observed behaviors...whether positive or negative. Keep a folder for each Leader with accomplishments you can refer to.

Request information from the Leader.

Request information from the Leader on his/her key work accomplishments for the progress review period being discussed.

Does the Leader demonstrate successful performance?

Determine if the Leader is demonstrating successful performance by reviewing the performance expectations discussed in the initial work planning and expectations meeting. Prepare notes on the key issues you plan to cover. Write down what you think the Leader has done/accomplished/learned to date and what he/she could have done better. Include examples of specific projects or assignments. Also, how do you see the Leader progressing on developing Leadership competencies?

- **Note:** If in preparing for the performance discussions you believe the Leader is not performing at a successful level, immediately contact your Human Resources Office to discuss what steps may, or should, be taken prior to meeting with the Leader.

Schedule the meeting.

Ask the Leader to come prepared to discuss his/her progress on work expectations to date, any concerns he/she may have, any barriers to date, and progress on competency developmental activities.

Use the form.

At one or more of the progress review discussions, you may want to use the STD 637 to assess progress to date. If appropriate, ask the Leader to do a self-assessment.

During the progress review discussion

Welcome the person. Review progress on assignments, observed and documented behaviors, job expectations, competency development, and any concerns or barriers. Give specific feedback. Give the Leader an opportunity to ask questions for clarification or to provide information or his/her ideas and insights.

Clearly articulate your expectations for the next progress review period and clarify any areas that might be vague or causing confusion.

Ask the Leader how he/she thinks the past period/year went, how he/she feels about the job, does he/she need more/less feedback, has adequate training and support been offered, etc.

Recognize any achievements to date.

Address any gaps in knowledge or skills or competency development.

If needed, address any concerns or problematic performance.

Ask for any feedback the Leader has for you. Listen carefully.

Confirm the date of the next progress discussion.

Thank the Leader for his/her contribution to organizational success.

After the progress review discussion

Document the discussion and any agreements that were made. Send a written copy to the Leader.

Follow-up on any action items within a reasonable time.

Progress review discussion: steps for the Leader

Before the discussion, review.

Review your performance expectations for the year. Determine how well you are progressing on goals and competency development activities. Have specifics about accomplishments, barriers, concerns, suggestions. Prepare a list of questions you may want to ask your Evaluator.

During the discussion, share and ask for feedback.

Share your perspectives on your progress to date, any barriers you face, and any new developmental activities you would like to undertake with your Evaluator.

Ask for feedback on your performance. How would your Evaluator currently rate you in each competency? How would you rate yourself? Listen carefully to feedback and clarify any unclear or new performance expectations.

After the discussion, write notes.

Write notes regarding any commitments or agreements made during the discussion.

Step 3: Help the Leader develop

As an Evaluator, you have a responsibility to develop your Leaders. Development activities must be right for the Leader, the position, and the organization. Integration of performance management and development activities ensures learning is targeted for positive results.

Developing Leaders involves more than just training. So as an Evaluator, be creative in determining developmental activities for your Leaders. Many training programs are excellent, but also consider informal methods as well. Many ideas are provided below.

Resources

- For each of the following leadership competencies, refer to the Leadership Competency Development Guides listed below. They include development ideas relating to coaching, mentoring, observing experts, reading books, using on-line resources, watching videos, listening to podcasts, or taking training classes. **Note:** The list of competencies differ somewhat for Executives. Development Guides for Executives are currently under development.
 - Communication
 - Conflict Management
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Team Leadership
 - Change Leadership
 - Vision and Strategic Thinking
 - Analytical Thinking
 - Customer Focus
 - Decision Making
 - Planning and Organizing
 - Thoroughness
 - Ethics and Integrity
 - Personal Credibility
 - Developing Others
 - Fostering Diversity
 - Workforce Management
- If a new first-level supervisor is being assessed, be sure to [check out all the free resources on DPA's website](#) that help meet the 80 hour requirement for new Leaders (that is, new supervisors/managers).
- Consider a "job-shadowing" assignment or [assign a formal mentor](#) to assist with Leader development.
- Encourage Leaders to network with others in similar jobs (inside or outside the department).
- Help Leaders develop relationships with others in your department or organization. That might be done by having them attend meetings or by incorporating a job shadowing assignment.
- Consider job rotations and special assignments. They can stretch and challenge Leaders and broaden their understanding of the organization.

- Encourage participation in "learning teams" that meet regularly to focus on improving performance.
- Offer coaching and counseling that provide individualized advice and instruction. The Evaluator does not have to always be the "coach." Find others in the organization with specialized skill or knowledge who can coach Leaders in specific areas.
- Model the behavior you expect your staff to develop.
- Encourage self-development. Encourage the Leader to participate in self-development activities that may be offered by colleges and professional associations. However, State time and monetary reimbursement depend on each department's unique operational needs and funding availability. For specific information on the department policy, contact Human Resources and/or the [Training Officer](#).

Although informal development activities cost very little, they have potentially big payoffs in terms of improved individual and organizational performance.

Create a clear action plan of "who does what by when" that links to each performance goal. For ideas, check out:

- [Example 1: sample development action plan for a first-level supervisor – PDF](#)
- [Example 2: sample development action plan for a first-level supervisor – PDF](#)

Make the best use of time and money for development activities. The goal is improve performance and get results.

- First look at free resources.
- If a training class is being considered, look for training courses that have clear objectives that tie to the Leaders job, and address any performance gaps. Make sure that the courses assess knowledge and skills *before and after* training. Pre- and post- skill and performance assessments help ensure that training is effective and that the skills can be put to use back on the job.
- When a Leader takes a training course, meet with him/her before the course begins and after it ends. Before training, discuss the course objectives and the outcomes you expect. Explain what behaviors are considered successful, what behaviors you have observed that needs change (if any) and how the training will enhance performance. After the course, ask the Leader to discuss what he/she learned, how this new knowledge can enhance performance, and how the course will help the Leader achieve career goals. If appropriate, an Evaluator may also ask the Leader to make a presentation to other Leaders to share knowledge/training materials. This will give the Evaluator an opportunity to assess the Leader's grasp of the training.
- **Note:** Also keep in mind that training and/or development activities may become a critical component of addressing unsuccessful performance. Additionally, always refer to your department's policy (if any) regarding training opportunities

Step 4: Evaluate the Leader

Effective final performance evaluation discussions are often well-planned. Such discussions are the result of the ongoing feedback and discussions between the Evaluator and Leader that occurred throughout the evaluation period. The goal is to avoid surprises. If the Evaluator and Leader follow the Performance Management Cycle, they will likely:

- Communicate clear performance expectations.
- Clearly identify goals for competency development.
- Discuss any performance deficiencies.
- Implement efforts to correct behaviors.

Toward the end of the evaluation period, it is time to formalize observations in writing and provide a written performance evaluation. Improving leadership relationships by evaluating performance is a core strategy to develop and retain leaders and to improve organizational performance.

- **Note:** According to Gov. Code §19992.8, formal evaluations should be conducted no more than 12 months from the last date of the last evaluation period

Resources

- [How to avoid common pitfalls in writing performance evaluations](#)
- [Writing SMART objectives](#)
- [Performance evaluation form - PDF](#)
- [Executive Officer Performance Evaluation Guide from the Department of Consumer Affairs - PDF](#)
- [IDP/PAS \(STD 637\) – PDF](#)
- [CalSTRS Executive Review form - PDF](#)
- [Caltrans Supervisory Annual/Supervisory & Managerial Probationary Report \(PM-0944\) form – PDF](#)
- [Caltrans CEA & Managerial Annual Performance Plan, Contract and Review \(PM-0945\) form - PDF](#)

Performance evaluation discussion

- [Performance evaluation discussion: steps for the Evaluator](#)
- [Performance evaluation discussion: steps for the Leader](#)

How to avoid common pitfalls in writing performance evaluations

When writing performance evaluations, Evaluators may experience pitfalls regarding how he/she evaluates Leaders. Evaluators should consider using scripted, pre-written expectations for positions, to avoid most pitfalls.

The first step to avoid common pitfalls is to acknowledge pitfalls are possible. The second step is to be aware of what to do to avoid them.

Common pitfalls include:

- Halo Effect
- Recent Event Effect
- Stereotyping
- Comparing
- Mirroring
- "Bad Guy" Complex

Halo Effect

The tendency to see the Leader's performance through rose-colored glasses. By doing so, Evaluators may avoid or ignore unresolved issues or ongoing, smaller problem areas that need attention. One of the key steps to turn an organization into a "learning organization" is to acknowledge that we all have things to learn and develop. This effect is also based on personal feelings toward the Leader. A performance evaluation is for objective observations on Leader performance, not for expressing personal feelings.

How to avoid the Halo Effect: Continuous documentation offers Evaluators a more comprehensive, objective view of the Leader's performance by considering all aspects of job performance.

Recent Event Effect

The tendency to rate the Leader based on a recent event, either positive or negative. Performance evaluations are for the entire review period not based on the past month alone.

How to avoid the Recent Event Effect: Maintain a file of the Leader's work products, annual goals, status reports, weekly productivity reports, etc. that can serve as a good reminder of what the Leader accomplished all year. Meeting records when work issues are discussed can also be good reminders of successful work or project tasks over time. Evaluators can also ask Leaders to submit a list of their major contributions prior to writing the performance evaluation.

Stereotyping

Using preconceived perceptions of the Leader when evaluating him/her. Stereotyping often comes from one's own biases, perceptions, and experiences that can be difficult to eliminate. Stereotyping can also occur from associations, such as, when a Leader reminds the Evaluator of an unkind relative or past poor performer.

How to avoid Stereotyping: Being aware of your own stereotypes is the first step towards preventing them from appearing in a written performance evaluation. Another strategy is to focus on the actual work performance as compared to personal characteristics that may contribute to the stereotyping.

Comparing

Evaluators may tend to compare the Leader's performance with another Leader in the same position, although their duties may be quite different. Even though two Leaders may have the same title, it is important to keep in mind that their duties may offer them different opportunities and require different skills and have different successful behavioral indicators.

How to avoid Comparing: It is recommended that Evaluators keep up-to-date job descriptions on all of their Leaders. When writing performance evaluations, review the job description of each Leader and successful behavioral indicators to determine how well he/she performed his/her duties. If you need to update the job description, take some time to talk with the Leader about how his/her duties have changed and add job-related competencies. By keeping job descriptions current, a sense of accomplishment and a list of duties are visible so the Evaluator can see each position and Leader as an individual.

Mirroring

People have a tendency to favor people much like themselves. This tendency carries over into the workplace and during the performance review period. Evaluators may have difficulty evaluating and appreciating the differences that others bring to the workplace. Evaluators may rate some Leaders higher if those Leaders are most like themselves.

How to avoid Mirroring: Honor the diversity of skills, knowledge, and experience of your entire leadership team. Spend some time thinking of the value that a diverse workforce brings and rate the individual contributions accordingly.

"Bad Guy" Complex

Evaluators often want to avoid being the "bad guy." They may avoid writing negative evaluations because they fear it will reflect badly on them if a Leader is not performing to expectations. There can also be concern of "upsetting" the Leader with "negative" feedback. The effect of this tendency is that the Leader will not know where they need to improve their work performance or behaviors and the result is they never get the chance to get better.

How to avoid the "Bad Guy" Complex: Observe a colleague or manager deliver a performance improvement discussion with a Leader who has been under-performing and note how they give the feedback. Evaluators can practice, mentor, or talk with a peer on how to avoid this type of pitfall. Start your conversation with a positive and tell the Leader what they are doing well. Ask them what areas they feel they need to improve and have a discussion regarding the areas they mention. Then discuss the areas that you see that need improvement and ask them what suggestions they have to improve.

Performance evaluation discussion: steps for the Evaluator

Before the performance evaluation discussion

Review.

Review any work products and progress to date. Review notes on observed behaviors...whether positive or negative. Keep a folder for each Leader with accomplishments you can refer to.

Get a list of accomplishments.

Request information from the Leader on his/her key work accomplishments for the progress review period being discussed.

Make a determination.

Determine if the Leader is demonstrating successful performance by reviewing the performance expectations discussed in the initial work planning and expectations meeting. Prepare notes on the key issues you plan to cover. Write down what you think the Leader has done/accomplished/learned to date and what he/she could have done better. Include examples of specific projects or assignments. Also, how do you see the Leader progressing on developing Leadership competencies?

- **Note:** If in preparing for the performance discussions you believe the Leader is not performing at a successful level, immediately contact your Human Resources Office to discuss what steps may, or should, be taken prior to meeting with the Leader.

Schedule the meeting.

Ask the Leader to come prepared to discuss his/her progress on work expectations to date, any concerns he/she may have, any barriers to date, and progress on competency developmental activities.

Use the form.

At one or more of the progress review discussions, you may want to use the STD 637 to assess progress to date. If appropriate, ask the Leader to do a self-assessment.

During the performance evaluation discussion

Welcome the person. Review progress on assignments, observed and documented behaviors, job expectations, competency development, and any concerns or barriers. Give specific feedback. Give the Leader an opportunity to ask questions for clarification or to provide information or his/her ideas and insights.

Clearly articulate your expectations for the next progress review period and clarify any areas that might be vague or causing confusion.

Ask the Leader how he/she thinks the past period/year went, how he/she feels about the job, does he/she need more/less feedback, has adequate training and support been offered, etc.

Recognize any achievements to date.

Address any gaps in knowledge or skills or competency development.

If needed, address any concerns or problematic performance.

Ask for any feedback the Leader has for you. Listen carefully.

Confirm the date of the next progress discussion.

Thank the Leader for his/her contribution to organizational success.

After the performance evaluation discussion

Document the discussion and any agreements that were made. Send a written copy to the Leader.

Follow-up on any action items within a reasonable time.

Performance evaluation discussion: steps for the Leader

Before the discussion, review.

Review your performance expectations for the year. Determine how well you are progressing on goals and competency development activities. Have specifics about accomplishments, barriers, concerns, suggestions. Prepare a list of questions you may want to ask your Evaluator.

During the discussion, share and ask for feedback.

Share your perspectives on your progress to date, any barriers you face, and any new developmental activities you would like to undertake with your Evaluator.

Ask for feedback on your performance. How would your Evaluator currently rate you in each competency? How would you rate yourself? Listen carefully to feedback and clarify any unclear or new performance expectations.

After the discussion, write notes.

Write notes regarding any commitments or agreements made during the discussion.

Step 5: Recognize successful performance

Evaluators should recognize Leaders individually *and* as a member of their team for their performance and contributions to the organization's mission. However, this is sometimes forgotten. Leaders should note who is recognized and why.

Recognition can be formal or informal and just like providing feedback, it should be ongoing. It can be as simple as saying "thank you" or writing a letter of appreciation. However, if you have a very high performing Leader, you may want to explore more formal recognition options.

So, if a Leader has a success, gather feedback (preferably in writing) from customers, stakeholders, or whoever was involved, and make sure that positive performance is recognized.

Informal ways to recognize performance

Be sure to tailor to the individual.

- Create success ceremonies.
- Provide recognition certificates.
- Give out recognition letters.
- Create "Behind the Scenes Recognition Certificates" for those not usually in the limelight who were key to the success of a project or initiative.
- Coordinate a "thank you" call from the Director.
- Create a "Wall of Fame" to honor high achievers and special achievements in your organization.
- **Note:** When developing informal ways to recognize performance, be sure to comply with the Governor's memo of 2/18/11 on eliminating S.W.A.G.:
<http://www.gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=16911>

Job enrichment as recognition

You can also recognize Leaders by enriching their jobs. These types of recognitions are often more powerful than a "thank you." The key to effective recognition is to know what motivates the individual. For example, job-enriching activities could include:

- *Interesting work.* Give assignments the Leader will be excited to do and help him/her develop new skills and meet new people.
- *Involvement/ownership in decisions.* Involving direct report Leaders in decisions that affect them is respectful and practical. It also enhances their commitment to the decision, the organization, and increases their involvement to implement changes.
- *Independence/autonomy/flexibility.* Most employees, especially experienced, top-performing Leaders, value the freedom to do their job as they see fit. Depending on job requirements and operational needs, departments and agencies can offer teleworking, alternate work schedules, and other flexible options.
- *Increased visibility, opportunity.* For some Leaders, providing visibility is a public way of giving credit for outstanding work. Ask the Leader to attend a meeting with you, make a presentation with a high-level group, etc.

- *Instant feedback and communication.* Technology is fast and has generated an expectation for immediate feedback. Leaders want information and they want it fast. They crave knowledge about how they are doing in their jobs and how the organization is doing in achieving its mission and goals.

Formal ways to recognize performance in State service

The State established the Merit Award Program in 1950 to promote employee participation and to save the State money. It is a formal system for monetarily rewarding employees who submit ideas that reduce or eliminate state expenditures, improve safety, and/or improve state operations: It consists of three programs.

Employee Suggestion Program

This is a formal system for rewarding employees who submit ideas that reduce or eliminate State expenditures or improve safety or the operation of State government.

Medal of Valor

For those State employees whose extraordinary acts of bravery and heroism save human lives.

Superior Accomplishment Awards

These awards recognize an individual or team whose work contributes to improve California State Government.

More information on these awards can be found at

<http://www.dpa.ca.gov/benefits/merit/mapregulations.shtm>

Additional Resources

Scorecards for assessing leaders

To help leaders develop meaningful Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and integrate leadership competencies into day-to-day activities, assessment tools have been developed for each of the leadership responsibility levels in the Leadership Competency Model. It is recommended that evaluators and leaders:

1. First, review [the Leadership Competency Model](#).
2. Second, determine the leader's responsibility level (see definitions of responsibility levels, below.)
3. Third, complete the appropriate Leadership Assessment Tool (scorecard) for the leader's responsibility level separately and then discuss the results and come up with a mutually agreed upon Individual Development Plan.

Leadership assessment tools

- [Leadership Assessment Tool for First-Level Supervisors- PDF](#)
- [Leadership Assessment Tool for Second-Level Supervisors - PDF](#)
- [Leadership Assessment Tool for Managers - PDF](#)
- [Leadership Assessment Tool for Executives - PDF](#)

Definitions of responsibility levels

This is a level within an occupational group, it is the working level and not necessarily the classification title.

First level Supervisor

Typically a working supervisor who may perform the most difficult or sensitive work and supervises a small group or unit; provides day-to-day supervision in one or more functional areas.

Second Level Supervisor

Full supervisory and administrative responsibilities, usually in charge of a well-established and fully developed function; typically supervises other supervisors.

Manager

An employee who has significant responsibilities for formulating or administering agency or departmental policies and programs; usually supervises high level supervisors

Executive

A high administrative and policy-influencing position within the State civil service. Key responsibilities include managing or administering a mission-critical function(s) and/or rendering policy advice to top-level administrators. Organizationally, the position is in the top managerial levels and assumes broad responsibility for policy implementation and extensive participation in policy evolution.

Leadership competency guides

You can find leadership competency guides on DPA's website at <http://www.dpa.ca.gov/training/leadership/main.htm>.

Government codes

CALIFORNIA CODES, GOVERNMENT CODE, SECTION 19992.8-19992.14

19992.8. After consultation with appointing powers and other supervising officials the department shall assist and encourage state agencies to establish standards of **performance** for managerial employees and may provide training in developing **performance appraisal** systems. Such standards shall be mutually developed by managerial employees and their appointing powers. These standards shall be based on individual and organizational requirements established, in writing, for the reporting period. The reporting period shall be no more than 12 months from the date of the last report following the end of the employee's probationary period.

19992.9. The system of **performance appraisal** reports shall be designed by managerial employees and their appointing powers to permit the evaluation by appointing powers of each employee's work **performance** as accurately and fairly as is reasonably possible. The evaluation shall be set forth in a written **performance appraisal** report, the form for which shall be approved by the department. The department may investigate administration of the system and enforce adherence to appropriate standards.

19992.10. Appointing powers shall prepare **performance appraisal** reports and keep them on file as prescribed by department rule. The rules shall provide that managerial employees be shown the **performance appraisal** report covering their own service and are privileged to discuss it and sign it with the appointing power before it is filed. The extent to which the reports shall be open to inspection by the public shall be prescribed by department rule.

19992.11. **Performance** reports shall be considered, in the manner prescribed by department rule, for purposes of employee development, in determining salary increases and decreases, the order of layoffs, the advisability of transfers, demotions, and dismissals. **Performance** reports shall be considered in promotional examinations in the manner prescribed by State Personnel Board rule. On or before July 1, 1988, **performance appraisal** reports for managers shall be used to award merit salary increases on a flexible basis so that each such employee may receive up to a 10-percent increase provided that this does not increase the employee's salary beyond the highest step of the range for the class of position occupied by the employee. The total amount awarded by the appointing power for merit salary increases through this practice shall not exceed the amount which otherwise would be available under current methods.

19992.12. The department may establish rules under which records of unsatisfactory service may lead to reduction in class and compensation, and providing for the manner in which persons falling below the standards of efficiency may be removed from their positions by the appointing powers, substantially as in the case of removals for cause.

19992.13. The department shall establish a procedure whereby a managerial employee may appeal his or her **performance appraisal** report to the appointing power. At a minimum, these procedures shall permit appeals on the basis that the **performance appraisal** report was used to abuse, harass, or discriminate against the employee.

19992.14. Each state agency shall establish a system of **performance appraisal** reports which shall form the basis for awarding merit salary increases to managers on or before July 1, 1988. Any agency which fails to establish such a system on or before July 1, 1988, shall forfeit 50 percent of merit salary funds otherwise available for eligible managerial employees during that fiscal year. Any agency which fails to establish such a system on or before July 1, 1989, shall forfeit 75 percent of merit salary funds otherwise available for eligible managerial employees during that fiscal year. Any agency which fails to establish such a system on or before July 1, 1990, shall forfeit all merit salary funds otherwise available for eligible managerial employees during that fiscal year, and during each subsequent fiscal year during which such a system is not established.